

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method executable by an automated system without requiring intervention by a human user, comprising:
 - receiving customer feedback in the form of textual comments that originate with a human customer;
 - analyzing words in the customer feedback;
 - associating at least some of the words with respective one or more values; and
 - generating an indication to rate customer feedback based on the one or more values.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising defining a user-defined data type having one or more data structures for storing predefined words and associated values.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the one or more data structures comprise an array of the predefined words and associated values.
4. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising invoking a first routine associated with the user-defined data type to load the predefined words and respective values in the one or more data structures.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising invoking a second routine associated with the user-defined data type to calculate a score based on the words in the customer feedback and content of the one or more data structures,
 - wherein generating the indication is based on the score.
6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein invoking the first and second routines comprises invoking functions associated with the user-defined data type.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising storing the one or more data structures in a first relational table.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising storing customer feedback in a second relational table,

wherein generating the indication is based on performing a join of the first and second relational tables.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising distributing the relational table across plural access modules.

10. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein receiving the customer feedback comprises receiving the customer feedback in electronic mail.

11. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein receiving the customer feedback comprises receiving customer-entered feedback at a web server.

12. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein receiving the customer feedback comprises translating voice feedback to text feedback.

13. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein receiving the customer feedback comprises receiving the customer feedback in a database system.

14. (Currently amended) An article comprising at least one storage medium containing instructions that when executed cause an automated system, without requiring intervention by a human user, to:

analyze words in customer feedback received in the form of textual comments that originate with a human customer;

associate at least some of the words with one or more values; and

generate an indication to rate the customer feedback based on the one or more values.

15. (Original) The article of claim 14, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to generate the indication by generating an indication of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

16. (Original) The article of claim 14, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to generate the indication by generating an indication of customer approval or disapproval.

17. (Original) The article of claim 14, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to generate the indication by generating an indication of customer emotion.

18. (Original) The article of claim 14, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to store rating data according to a user-defined data type, the rating data associating a list of predefined words with respective values.

19. (Original) The article of claim 18, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to associate the at least some of the words in the customer feedback with the one or more values based on the rating data.

20. (Original) The article of claim 18, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to store a negative value for a word having a negative connotation and a positive value for a word having a positive connotation in the rating data.

21. (Original) The article of claim 20, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to store modifier values for adjectives to increase the positive and negative values of the words.

22. (Original) The article of claim 18, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to invoke a first routine to generate the indication.

23. (Original) The article of claim 22, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to invoke the first routine by invoking a function associated with the user-defined data type.

24. (Original) The article of claim 22, wherein the instructions when executed cause the system to invoke a second routine to load the rating data into a relational table.

25. (Currently amended) An automated system comprising:
one or more storage modules to store rating data associating a list of predefined words with respective values; and
a controller adapted to analyze words in customer feedback received in the form of textual comments that originate with a human customer and to generate an indication to rate the customer feedback based on a comparison of words in the customer feedback and the rating data, all without requiring intervention by a human user.

26. (Original) The system of claim 25, the one or more modules to store the rating data in a first relational table.

27. (Original) The system of claim 26, the one or more modules to store the rating data as a user-defined data type in the first relational table.

28. (Original) The system of claim 27, the one or more storage modules to store the customer feedback in a second relational table.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the controller is adapted to perform a join of the first and second relational tables to perform the comparison.

30. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein the controller comprises a first routine to perform the comparison.

31. (Original) The system of claim 30, wherein the first routine is a function associated with the user-defined data type.

32. (Original) The system of claim 30, wherein the controller further comprises a second routine to load the rating data.